

Mississippi
Profile of State High School Exit Exam Policies

State exit exam policy	All students must pass all parts of the Mississippi Subject Area Testing Program (SATP) in order to receive a diploma.
Type of test	End-of-course, criterion-referenced
Purpose	<p>The purpose of the exam is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine prospective high school graduates' mastery of the state curriculum • Provide data to state policymakers on student attainment of state education goals to inform education policy decisions • Increase alignment of local curriculum and programs of instruction with state education standards • Meet a state graduation mandate • Meet NCLB requirements (English II and Algebra I)
Major changes in exit exam policy since the 2009-10 school year for financial reasons	The size and scope of most teacher committees that participate in the data review, item review, and bias and standard-setting processes have been reduced. Funding constraints have also forced scaling back new item development in the move towards adoption of the PARCC common core state standards assessments.
Major changes in exit exam policy since the 2009-10 school year for <i>other</i> reasons	A new Biology I assessment began in the 2010-11 school year. A new U.S. History assessment will be implemented during the 2011-12 school year.
Year first administered	Tests in Algebra I, Biology I, English II (with a writing component), and U.S. History were first administered in 2000-01. Algebra I and English II have new curriculum frameworks that were implemented during the 2007-08 school year. Exit exams were revised to align with the new curriculum. The new Biology I assessment was first administered in the 2010-11 school year. The new U.S. History assessment will be administered in the 2011-12 school year.

Year diplomas first withheld	To earn a high school diploma in previous years, Mississippi students had to pass the Functional Literacy Exam, a minimum-competency exam introduced in the mid-1980s. In September 2000, the state board of education adopted the SATP tests as the new exit exam system. The SATP was phased in over a five-year period while the Functional Literacy Exam was phased out. The requirement to pass U.S. History applied to the graduation class of 2003; the requirement to pass English II applied to the graduation class of 2004; the requirement to pass Biology I applied to the graduation class of 2005. With the requirement to pass Algebra I added for 2006, the class of 2006 became the first required to pass all four SATP end-of-course tests to graduate. (See the phase-in schedule at www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/osa/grad.pdf .)
Subjects tested on exam	Algebra I, English II (with a writing component), Biology I, U.S. History from 1877 to present. Content is based on the Mississippi Curriculum Frameworks.
Subjects required for graduation	Algebra I, English II, U.S. History from 1877 to present, and Biology I
Grade exam first administered	Students take the exams at different grade levels, depending on when they are enrolled in the course being tested. Generally, Algebra I is the test first introduced in grade 8, whereas the other tests are introduced in high school.
Grade(s) exam aligned to	The tests are aligned to course content rather than to grade levels. However, most students take Algebra I and Biology I in 9 th grade, English II in 10 th grade, and U.S. History in 11 th grade.
Number of retakes allowed <i>before</i> the end of grade 12	A minimum of three each school year.
Number of retakes allowed <i>after</i> grade 12	Students who have completed all graduation requirements except passing the exit exam may retake the tests until they achieve a passing score. There is no time limit that restricts a

	person from taking the test.
Is the exit exam used for No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability purposes?	Results from the first time students take the Algebra I and English II tests are reported for NCLB. If a student passes a test such as the Algebra I test for the first time in 8 th or 9 th grade, the results will be reported for NCLB accountability purposes when the student is in 10 th grade.
Is the same cut score used for graduation and NCLB accountability purposes?	No. Cut scores for proficient performance for NCLB are higher than the score required for graduation. To be considered proficient for NCLB, students must attain the following scores: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algebra I: 344 Algebra I New Curriculum Test: 650 • English II: 346 English II New Curriculum Test: 650 • Biology I: 335 (not used for NCLB) Biology I new curriculum test: 650 • U.S. History: 347 (not used for NCLB) Graduation cut scores are 300 on the old tests, and for the new tests, 647 for Algebra I and 645 for English II and Biology.
Considerations given to changing the cut score needed to pass the exam for graduation purposes in the past year	No
Alternate paths to graduation for students other than English language learners (ELLs) or students with disabilities	Yes. Students who fail a subject area test by one point on three separate occasions and have participated in remediation designed to assist students in passing the appropriate subject area test may submit an appeal for an alternative assessment as a substitute evaluation which relies on other evidence to demonstrate their mastery of the subject, and they may be able to receive a regular diploma. Students who do not receive a regular diploma because they fail the SATP can continue to take the SATP until they pass it and receive a regular diploma. Students who have completed all other requirements for graduation and are no longer enrolled in high school remain eligible to retest. These students include those who enroll in a GED program, those who enroll in a community college, and those who join the work force. Other alternative paths to graduation are under consideration for the near future.

Determination of eligibility to pursue these alternate paths to graduation	Student, parent, and school choice.
Number and percentage of students who used alternate paths in 2010-11 school year	While Mississippi is moving towards adopting alternate pathways for students, those programs are not yet finalized so we are unable to report a particular number and percentage at this time.
Alternate paths to graduation specifically for English language learners	No. However, English language learners may use the same alternate paths available to general education students. English language learners who qualify to receive accommodations on state tests and who are pursuing a regular diploma may use only allowable accommodations when taking the subject area end-of-course tests to meet graduation requirements.
Number and percentage of ELL students using alternate paths in 2010-11 school year	While Mississippi is moving towards adopting alternate pathways for students, those programs are not yet finalized so we are unable to report a particular number and percentage at this time.
Alternate paths to graduation specifically for students with disabilities	Students with disabilities can receive a certificate of completion or an occupational diploma. These students must participate in subject-area testing for NCLB reporting, but these alternate paths do not require that students pass the subject area tests. Students with disabilities pursuing a regular diploma may participate in the High-Stakes Alternative Assessment after their initial participation in subject area testing. This alternate assessment is available only for students with disabilities who are pursuing a regular diploma but would need an unallowable testing accommodation in order to take the general assessment. Students with disabilities who have a current individualized education program (IEP) or 504 Accommodation Plan may take the subject area tests with accommodations. If the student is pursuing a regular diploma, the student must take the test(s) using only allowable accommodations.
Number and percentage of students with	While Mississippi is moving towards adopting alternate pathways for students, those

disabilities using alternate paths in 2010-11 school year	programs are not yet finalized so we are unable to report a particular number and percentage at this time.
Is the exit exam used by postsecondary institutions for undergraduate admission purposes?	No
Is the exit exam used by postsecondary institutions for placement purposes?	No
Are students who meet a certain standard on the state exit exam granted exemptions on college placement exams?	No
Can students receive any form of postsecondary education course credit for their performance on the exit exam?	No
Access to initial and cumulative pass rates on high school exit exams	http://orsap.mde.k12.ms.us/MAARS/index.jsp
State participation in the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)	Mississippi has adopted the CCSS in both English language arts and math.
CCSS testing consortia membership	Mississippi is a member of PARCC only.

Impact of adoption of the CCSS on high school exit exam policies	Mississippi anticipates that exit exams will continue upon adoption of the CCSS assessments. The major change will be shifting from the English II and Algebra I end-of-course exam to whatever high school math and language arts assessments that PARCC implements.
Plans to replace or realign current exit exam in English language arts with a new assessment aligned to the CCSS	Yes. This change is anticipated no earlier than the 2014-15 school year.
Plans to replace or realign current exit exam in math with a new assessment aligned to the CCSS	Yes. This change is anticipated no earlier than the 2014-15 school year.
Plans to maintain current exit exams in subjects other than English language arts and math once the Common Core State Standards are fully implemented	Yes
Will changes in state exit exams mentioned above make the exams more rigorous, less rigorous, or about the same?	The proposed changes should result in more rigorous examinations.
Preparation for students and teachers to transition to new exam	A wide range of initiatives are aimed at increasing teacher and administrative capacity.